

The Mystery of Hartley House

By CLIFFORD S. RAYMOND

Illustrated by IRWIN MYERS

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MYSTERY!

A fine old isolated country place, with a murder story, a haunted pool and a general atmosphere of the unusual; a rich old American owner, with a Spanish wife and a beautiful daughter; a young resident physician, a young girl, and the girl—that's material enough for a first-class mystery story. But when the mother asks her daughter and the doctor to become "nominally engaged"—to discourage the advances of the family butler—why, you get a hint of the unusual qualities of this story of mystery.

CHAPTER I.

Rain had been falling for five days when I first saw Hartley house. The place had so much local distinction that a village of five miles from the estate was named Hartley, for it.

Even when drenched and dripping in a storm which had lasted for five days in late May, the spot was beautiful and charming; it had antiquity, that rare thing in a new land. Its two thousand acres, handsomely arranged for decorative and agricultural purposes, lay along the river bank, with an incoherent and interesting littoral where the river was two miles wide.

I had been an interne at St. Julian's hospital, and at the close of my last year Dr. Brownell had asked me if my arrangements would make it possible for me to undertake a case which he thought might be profitable and interesting to a young physician. It was that of Mr. Homer Sidney, the owner of Hartley house.

"I never saw so strange a will to live," said the doctor when he discussed the circumstances with me. "The old man is indomitable. For that reason he is interesting. He lives because he wills to live for some tremendous reason of which I know nothing. It is enormous. You may live to see him die; I am afraid I shall not—and he is seventy and I am fifty."

I decided to accept. It may have been professional weakness, but in addition to the financial certainty offered there was a professional interest aroused. If Dr. Brownell were attracted by a human being's will to live there certainly was something imperiously interesting about that human being.

The recollection of Hartley as I first saw it remains as an enduring impression. The long downpour of rain had given the place a spiritual aspect. One felt as if the soul were saturated.

It was only occasionally in a normal mind that weather works a spiritual effect. I thought my mind was normal, but I felt the spiritual depression.

The way from the station for three miles was through ordinary American small farm land. Then it changed abruptly. Antiquity began to show. The driver said we were in the Hartley grounds.

I was so depressed by the rain, by my own uncertainty, by thinking over the decision I had made and seemed about to regret, by the dismal prospects—or at least the uncertain prospects—that I should have been glad for any sustaining human association. At the end of my journey I soon found such association and was thereafter happy in it, but approaching the place I was apprehensive. My driver had been, if not unapproachable, at least stupid and dismal.

It somewhat astonished me when suddenly he began to talk. We were then about a half mile from the house. "I wish you had come an hour earlier," he said.

"Why?" I asked.

"It's not a coward," said the driver, "at least, no more than usual, but I don't like to be in here alone, and I've got to go home alone."

In a fashion he expressed what might have been my mood if I had known more of the place. I could sympathize with him. The rain had done this for me.

"What have you to be afraid of?" I asked. "Is something haunted around here?" It seemed as if so beautiful a spot ought to have this interest. He stopped his horse.

"I'm going back out of here like a scared pig," he said, "—that is, if the old horse can stand it. But you're going to live here for a while, and I'll stop a minute to show you where they say the ghost walks."

He pointed to where the river had eaten a substantial bit out of the bank, making a pool or tiny bay. The road, swerving toward the river here, was within thirty feet of it.

"It's the natural for a man to kill his brother," said my driver, "and something unnatural comes to it. A man killed his brother there, and something unnatural has come of it. That's why I'll be just as well satisfied to get you to the house and myself back out of here before dark."

"Get along, then," I said. "It looks like an ordinary place to me."

"To me too," said my driver. "And I don't want it ever to look extraordinary."

"Who was killed there?" I asked.

"You'll learn the story soon enough," said the driver, "if you're going to stay in this house. You'll learn it better than I can tell you."

"What do you want?" he asked. I explained that I was Dr. Michelson and wanted nothing that I was not wanted for. I did not like his manner and was not inclined to ignore it or to propitiate him as ordinarily one would. He had, at first sight, an extraordinary power of observation. At the time I did not understand my weakness, but afterward I did. The man was abnormal as an irritant.

Thus my appearance at Hartley house was so unfortunate that if the servants' contumacy and my resentment had had another moment, the door would have been slammed in my face and I should have been walking back to Hartley station. At that hesitant moment in my fortunes, a woman's voice intervened.

"Jed," it said, "who's there?" The servant opened the door wider, and I saw a lady, a South American, I thought.

"I am Dr. Michelson," I said. "Yes, doctor," she replied, "we have been expecting you. I am Mrs. Sidney. Where is your baggage?"

"I have only a handbag with me here," I said.

"Come in," she said, "Jed will take it." He did, but made me see the ill nature of his reception of me and of his duty. He had also, at the direction of Mrs. Sidney, to show me to my quarters.

"Jed," I said, in my room, "we have not made the best start for two people who may have to live together for some time."

"Are you going to stay here?" he asked.

"I am supposed to," I said. "A dollar won't make you welcome," he said, and left me looking at the coin in my hand.

I was called to dinner and had it alone in a large dining room. When I had finished a maid told me that Mr. Sidney would be glad to see me if it were convenient for me—that he did not need me professionally, but that socially he would be delighted if I could come to his dinner.

He was sitting in a large arm chair in a great room with a great fireplace. Later I perceived the fascinating details of the room, but just then Mr. Sidney had all my attention.

Dr. Brownell told me of the remarkable will to live which I should find. It was instantly apparent. The old man was a mystery.

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ingenuously had it been concealed. The knob seemed a part of the decoration of the panel, and the bolt was of thin steel. I found it only by finding the socket into which it could be shot.

The rain had stopped, and although the windows were dripping, there was a glorious, radiant sunlight. The effect was exhilarating. It worked a spiritual change. Man, said the morning, was made to be happy.

Exulting in pleasant emotions, I let myself out of the main door and re-entered the house. The door was open. I took a short walk across the lawn toward the woods. A gardener asked me if I were the new doctor and said if I had leisure during the day he wished I would come to the cottage beyond the gardens. His name had been enough.

The house was as still when I re-entered. Jed was the first person I saw, and to my astonishment he was not only civil but pleasant and candid.

"Did you have a fair night, doctor?" he asked. "Sometimes a night in a new place is disturbed, and I owe you apologies. We have had here occasion at times for locking doors on the outside as well as on the inside, and last night I forgot myself and threw the bolt of your door. I am occasionally in liquor, and last night I had a touch too much."

I smiled at his candor and said something jokingly in comment. "A servant can't be blamed, doctor, for that," he said, "if his master leads him into it. We have coffee before breakfast. I'll serve you anywhere. The morning papers are in the library. There's a porch off it with a good view. It's my favorite spot of a morning. I recommend that you have your coffee there."

His friendliness was amusing, but I found his suggestion good, and being fond of coffee, enjoyed it with a half hour of magnificent view and a cigarette. The morning was odorous after the rain.

The house was a charming structural disorder of L's and wings, porches and balconies. It was very old, and one could see where different generations had contributed to its growth. The walls were backgrounds for hollockes or support for climbing roses or ivy. It had plenty of sunlight, but dense white oak woods came close up.

I held myself in readiness to attend my patient at his convenience, but it was ten o'clock before I was summoned. Mr. Sidney was pleasant and animated.

"We must arrive at a schedule," I suggested. "This is a little too late in the day to satisfy Dr. Brownell's ideas of what my duties are."

"But, my dear doctor," he said, "I do not wake until nine. I need my sleep. I do not go to sleep until one."

"I should advise early hours," I said. "Of course you would, but you must remember that you are dealing with a man, at the end of his life, trying to make the most of it. I like to remain awake late."

"Then you must," I said. "I shall consider it settled to see you at ten."

"Not at all," he said, "sometimes I sit up with me until one. Do you like chess?"

"I never played."

"A young doctor does not drink."

"I do," he said. "It is a great satisfaction to have some one whom you can beat at chess and whom you can see enjoying wine. Doctor, I have yielded to my friend Brownell's demand for constant attention, but as you see, he will not let me do a great deal for a physician to do. I eat well, I sleep well, and so long as my sensations are pleasant, I want to live. They are not so. I'd like to have you as a new friend in the house. I like to talk to you. I like to be read to. Will you relax and be just a friend?"

"With pleasure," I said, "so long as nothing interferes with the physician."

"That's a bargain," he said. "At three o'clock this afternoon you shall read to me."

During my spare time I walked about the grounds. A part of the estate, about thirty acres, which seemed to be architecturally intimate and related to the house, was completely enclosed by a twelve-foot brick wall surmounted by a crenelated parapet. Beyond the river's edge, and was continued out into the water in a heavily buttressed fashion. Only a good swimmer could have rounded it and come into the place. It looked like a carefully but strangely designed protection.

In the dog kennels were mastiffs and a number of Alouettes. I said to Jed that it seemed as if precautions had been taken against a perjured danger. He had been affable during the day, but his face glowed instantly.

"The wall was here when Mr. Sidney bought the place, but we are in a way isolated," he said shortly. "It is reasonable to take precautions. It will be a precaution for you not to go roaming the grounds at night. The dogs are not friendly then."

His surliness was easily passed over. I was good humored and wished to prove it.

"I have heard of the haunted bay," I said. "What is its story?"

"Every fool in and about the place talks of that," he said. "You'll get too much of the story any day now. But that isn't why we have the dogs. We don't take any stock in ghosts in this house."

He was offended and went away. At three o'clock I saw my patient again, and he wanted me to read to him. I read to him for an hour. Then he took a nap.

I had been told that any time I wanted to go to town I might tell one of the chauffeurs to take me. I needed a thin file for the bolt on my door. It

annoyed me. I did not ask that who ever threw it at night should know that it was gone. It suited my purposes better that it should be gone and the person who used it should think it was still there. Therefore, after reading to Mr. Sidney I went to town for a thin file.

I got my file, and for greater stability on the return trip I took the seat beside Charles, the driver.

As we passed the pool, Charles referred to it.

"What's the story?" I asked.

"A man killed his brother there," said Charles. "He is now in the penitentiary at Altwick for life. His brother's ghost, they say, comes back. I've never seen it, but some people say they have."

"Who were the brothers?" I asked.

"They were the sons of the people who used to own this place—the Dobsons. He did not say anything more of it and I did not ask. I used the file on my bolt, leaving one end of it in the pocket. It could be thrown, but it could not bar the door."

Love at first sight.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HUNTING THE SPERM WHALE

One Taken Off West Coast of Scotland Realized Five Thousand Dollars for Its Captors.

A graphic account of the hunting and killing of a sperm whale is told by one who took part in it. Starting from the west coast of Scotland the whaler made for Rockall, a lonely granite pinnacle that juts out of the Atlantic about two hundred miles west of the Outer Hebrides. Why the whales go there is a mystery. But in early summer schools of them may be found in the neighborhood. The look-out soon spies a "blow," that is the fountain ejected by the whale as it comes to the surface to breathe. After some time the whaler in pursuit gets into suitable position, the skipper takes aim, fires his harpoon gun and a harpoon is embedded in the monster's body. The whale disappears away ten o'clock before I was summoned. Mr. Sidney was pleasant and animated.

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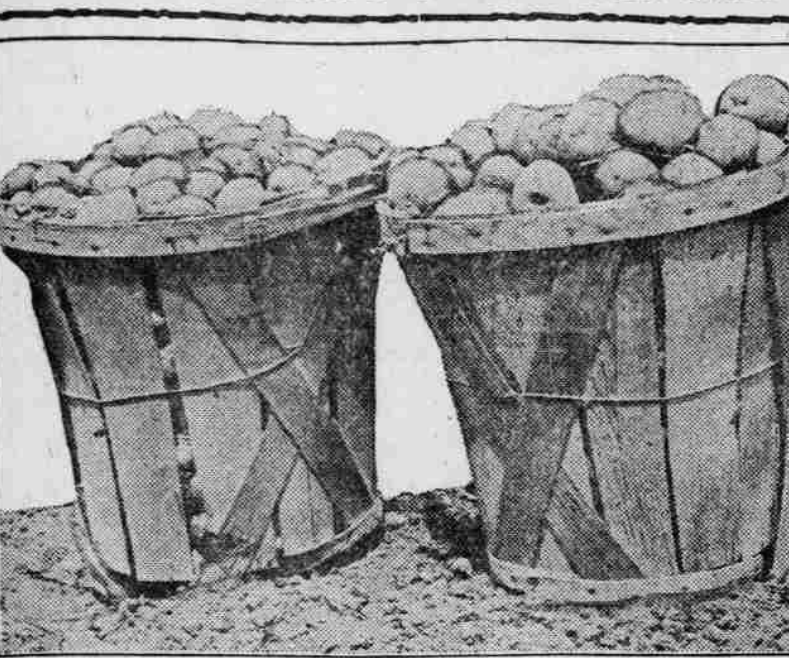
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UNIFORM POTATO GRADES FAVORED



Potatoes Graded and Packed Ready for Market.

Proper distribution of farm products requires, first of all, that a common understanding exist as the basis of negotiations between producers and purchasers. The bureau of markets, United States department of agriculture, is endeavoring to bring this about by the recommendation of grades for fruits and vegetables. No. 2 potatoes should be No. 2 potatoes throughout the United States and not, as at present, No. 2 potatoes in one section of the country and No. 1 somewhere else.

Higher Grade Demanded. During the war period the United States food administration required licensed dealers to use government potato grades. The results were so satisfactory that when the regulation was canceled the use of grades to a large extent was continued voluntarily. In fact, since that time a higher grade has been demanded to provide for produce of highest quality.

Therefore the bureau of markets now recommends United States grades in addition to grades No. 1 and No. 2.

Grade fancy consists of sound potatoes of one variety which are mature, bright, smooth, well shaped, free from dirt or other foreign matter, frost injury, sunburn, second growth, growth cracks, cuts, scab, soft rot, dry rot, and damage caused by diseases, insects or mechanical or other means. The range in size shall be stated in terms of minimum and maximum diameter or weight following the grade name, but in no case shall the diameter be less than two inches.

In order to allow for variations in demand to commercial grading and handling 5 per cent by weight of any lot may vary from the range in size stated, and, in addition, 3 per cent by weight of any such lot may be below the remaining requirements of this grade, but not more than one-third of such 3 per cent; that is to say, not more than 1 per cent by weight of the entire lot may have the flesh injured by soft rot.

Particulars in Circular. Complete particulars regarding United States potato grades are contained in Department Circular 98, which will be mailed free upon request to the bureau of markets.

Running Potatoes Through a Grader—An Increasing Number of Growers Are Doing This and So It Is More Important Than Ever That Uniform Grades for the Entire Country Be Followed.

MAKING FINE RECORD FOR IMPROVED Sires

Virginia Leads Country in Effort to Discard Scrubs.

Many Farmers of Pulaski County File Declaration They Will Follow Methods to Further Live Stock Improvement.

With over 10,000 head of domestic animals in addition to poultry, swine and horses, the "Better Sires—Better Stock" movement, Virginia leads all other states in the nation-wide effort to rid the country of scrub and other inferior sires. The stock mentioned is owned by 670 farmers, of whom 354 are in Pulaski county, Virginia. All of these live stock owners have filed with the United States department of agriculture declarations that they will not only use pure-bred sires, but will follow methods leading to further live stock improvement.

The bureau of animal industry, which is handling the enrollment records, received from Virginia recently 72 pledges in one day. Of this number 18 contained statements that purebred sires, including rams, boars and roosters, would be purchased. Cases of this kind show that the movement is not only educational, but is gradually resulting in the replacement of inferior males with purebreds.

Different types of inexpensive and reliable storage places, the room in the basement of the dwelling, the bank or the cellar, are described in detail. The saving in money and the additional variety in your winter menus will more than pay you for spending time in preparation for good, careful storage.

Clover, if cut early when just coming into blossom and given a light dressing of land plaster or of any fine compost, will, if the stalks are strong, make a vigorous second growth and ripen a paying crop of seed. Every farmer might raise his own clover seed by this method. The seed comes from the second crop and not from the first crop.

Plaster is the best and most economical mineral fertilizer to use.

The art of southwestern Indians—the Hopis and Pueblos of New Mexico and Arizona—is one of the few survivals of primitive art. To the Indian, action and clean-cut expression of what he saw meant everything, while backgrounds and incidentals which fill in a painting, to the modern artist, meant nothing. The Indian artist of today, like the primitive artist, wastes no brush strokes, and has no uncertainty.

The Buffalo Nickel. The Indian head and buffalo nickels were first put in circulation February 22, 1913, at the ceremonies inaugurating the memorial to the North American Indian at Fort Wadsworth, N. Y., Dr. George F. Kunz. The first one was given to President Taft and others were distributed among the Indian chiefs present. Iron Tail, a Sioux chief on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, was the model for the Indian head on the buffalo nickel.

Jud Tunkins. Jud Tunkins says a pessimist usually gets that way through envy of the good things enjoyed by the average optimist.

His Method. "Sir," sternly asked the horse-faced party, "by what means do you keep fit?" "I never had a fit," politely replied J. F. Glover. "If I ever have one I am sure I shall not care to keep it."—Kansas City Star.

The Question. Movie Magnate—How much money would you want to start working for me? Movie Star—How much money have you got?—Film Fun.

Incidental. She—I am sending Alice some flowers. She—She's celebrating her thirtieth birthday. He—Her thirtieth, eh? I wonder how old she can be if she's celebrating that.—Boston Transcript.

Stack Wheat Properly. Stacking wheat in a proper manner so it will turn water and keep well seems to be almost a lost art.

Keeps for Several Months. Wheat well stacked, especially bundle wheat, will keep for several months with comparatively little loss.

Vaccination of Hogs. Vaccination with anti-hog cholera serum requires some time and is somewhat expensive, it is true, but it is a form of insurance so that when an outbreak of cholera comes the vaccinated hogs will escape.

When to Cut Hay. Cut timothy just as the bloom is falling. If the crop is not too heavy and rain, cut as soon as the dew is off, let it cure a few hours, rake into windrows, and haul to the barn the same day.

The KITCHEN CABINET

The song of birds is all about. Not gay, but just contented; The air is laden with the sweets Of roses fragrant-scented.

SUMMER LUNCHEONS.

Myrtle Reed says: "Judging by the various books on the subject of luncheon people do not eat at noon unless they have company." This is probably the rule, especially among women in families where the man of the house takes his luncheon downtown. The housewife, even if entirely alone, should have something hot and take it sitting down. People who do not take time to eat and sleep presently are obliged to take time to die. People who, from false notions of economy, live upon improper food, are shortly put to the greater expense of a funeral. It is better to spend money on fruits, vegetables, milk and eggs than upon wreaths and gates ajar. The one who leads the procession, with his friends riding behind him, might better have postponed this particular entertainment for a few years, and in most cases it could be done by taking more time to live while engaged in the business of living.

Luncheon Dish—Save from breakfast two or three hard-cooked eggs. Prepare small squares of slightly stale bread, lightly before cutting. Make a cupful of white sauce to which add a layer of the bread and cover with white sauce, then one sliced egg repeat and finish the top with bread. Bake until the bread is brown. Add seasoning of salt, pepper, onion juice or any preferred seasoning. This dish may be made and served in the hot white sauce without baking.

Sardine Salad—Drain a can of sardines, sprinkle with lemon juice and alternate with hard-boiled egg quarters on a bed of lettuce. Serve with French dressing.

Cucumber Jelly—Cut peeled tomatoes and cucumbers into dice, saving the juice. Season with grated onion, salt and pepper. Add gelatin and sufficient hot water, using two cupfuls of salad material and a package of gelatin. Mold and serve on lettuce, with mayonnaise dressing.

If thou hast friends give them thy best endeavor. Thy warmest impulse and thy purest thought. Keeping in mind the word and action.—Elizabeth Prentiss.

SUMMER MEAT DISHES. Veal, chicken, sweetbreads and lamb are meats suitable for summer luncheons. Mince cold cooked veal, seasoned to taste, reheated in a white sauce and spread on thin slices of buttered toast, makes a good breakfast dish with a poached egg.

Mock Terrapin—Cut cooked calf's liver into dice. Put a tablespoonful of butter into saucepan, add salt, pepper, and paprika, cook until the butter is brown, then add two tablespoonfuls of flour and enough stock to make a moderately thick sauce. The stock may be made with beef extract and water. Add cold cooked parsley, half a cupful of cream, two hard cooked eggs cut fine, a tablespoonful of lemon juice and the liver. Cook until the liver is heated through; remove, add a dash of orange juice